

George Orwell's *1984*: the Organic Fusion of Art and Politics into One Whole

“What I have most wanted to do throughout the past ten years is to make political writing into an art.”

-----George Orwell: “Why I Write
(1946)”

Introduction

1984, a famous dystopian novel written in 1948, is the masterpiece of George Orwell (1903-1950), a distinguished modern British novelist, essayist, social critic, and political commentator. Orwell is ranked as one of the two best-achieved satirists in English literature, sharing the laureateship with Jonathan Swift, and as one of the three foremost masters of political writing in the 20th century, together with Aldous Huxley and Eugene Zamiatin.

As a writer of artistic enthusiasm and political integrity, Orwell pursues writing as his life-long career, and he is outraged by social injustices and evils of all types. Throughout his life, he tries arduously to search a voice to give vent to his concerns over what he believes to be wrong among the human race. In his writing, he is determined to fuse artistic and political purposes into one whole, and he achieves marvelous success here. He declares in 1947, “what I have most wanted to do throughout the past ten years is to make political writing into an art.”¹ During his short life of 47 years, he contributes abundant essays, journalistic reports, and novels through his heart and by his pen, in all of which he exposes oligarchic totalitarianism and social evils. His diligence and conscience award him much. During his last years, his career reaches its peak due to the last two novels of his, *Animal Farm* (1945) and *1984* (1948). The two books win him international fame as a writer of maturity and as a valiant fighter against social injustice. Both of the novels express his major concerns as a political writer in one way or another: the corruption of power, oligarchic totalitarianism, and the demise of human nature. A sincere humanist and a devoted political writer, Orwell successfully makes political writing into an art. Due to his remarkable artistic achievement and his political conscience, he has been, after his death in 1950, eulogized as a “saint” and as the “conscience of his generation”.²

Orwell and his **1984** have been continuously studied and commented upon. Critics of different times and political orientations have contributed various arguments about the writer and the novel. Today, it is still worthwhile to study the immortal writer and novel. **1984** has been a best seller in Britain and various other countries up to now and will continue into the future, for the readers still appreciate what he describes and voices in it. Orwell in this great book not only depicts a vivid picture of oligarchic totalitarianism, but also warns his later generations that this demonic social system, if not fought against, can prevail anywhere any time in the world. Therefore, by studying the novel, today's reader can come to the consciousness of the potential dangers of oligarchic totalitarianism so as to avoid it effectively. On the other hand, Orwell's literary achievement, which to a great extent lies in his simple but vigorous language and style, is one of the milestones in the history of English. He is one of the first men of letters who try to salvage English from corruption and vagueness. Today, his language has been taken as a model for learning and as a resource for generating linguistic power. We are confident that, by studying Orwell and his political and artistic values, we can learn a great deal from him both as a man and as a writer.

This thesis mainly comprises of four chapters. Chapter I deals with Orwell's life and his writing experiences, the main story of **1984**, and the analyses of its major characters and themes. Chapter II is concerned with the comments and criticism on the author and the novel. Chapter III discusses Orwell's achievement in his simple but marvelous language and style. Chapter IV is about Orwell's position in literary history, which includes his satire as compared with Jonathan Swift and his relationship with Dystopian writing. In addition, there are this introduction and a conclusion.

Notes

- 1 *The Orwellian Moment: Hindsight and Foresight in the Post-1984 World*, 3.
- 2 *Dictionary of Literary Bibliography*, Vol. 15, 407.

Chapter I. George Orwell and His **1984**

1. George Orwell: a Life

George Orwell, pseudonym of Eric Arthur Blair, is born into a genteel family

in India, on 25 June 1903, where his father is a junior public servant. Returning to Britain with his mother in 1905, he grows up in Henley-on-Thames. Orwell's childhood is not always a happy one. During his school years as a boarder, prejudice and class distinction constantly haunt him and leave a permanent dark impression upon his mind, which alienate him as if to a foreign land. Orwell's childhood psychological trauma nurtures his early antipathy toward authoritarianism and hierarchical system. His consciousness of a fundamental conflict between the individual and society later becomes an important social subject in his writing of the 1930s and a major political subject in his works of the 1940s.

In May 1917, Orwell is admitted into Eton, a famous school in England. In this school's liberal and tolerant atmosphere, Orwell further develops his radical feelings against inequality and social evils. Upon leaving Eton in December 1921, to his parents' surprise, he plans to apply for a position in the Indian Imperial Police; then he serves in Burma for five years. The Burmese experience does not bring him happiness: he witnesses at first hand the vicious behavior of the imperialists and the misery of the natives. He finds that it is impossible to accustom himself to a demanding, conformist society, and that he can not bear to take the colonial life as the background for his writing; thus in 1927 he resigns from the Indian Imperial Police and goes back permanently to England. He gradually sets up his goal as a writer.

Orwell goes to London to experience the life of the poor by living together with them. His first book, *Down and Out in Paris and London*, is published in 1933, in which he portrays social problems of his times. This book proves him a keen social observer and commentator, for he devotes himself to bringing to public the hardships haunting the underdog. By December 1933 he has finished his second book, *Burmese Days* (1934), which is the only book relating to his experience in Burma and which is written during a period when he commits himself to the formation of his career as an author. In this book, Orwell attacks British hypocrisy and imperialism through the portrait of the social and moral bankruptcy of the English colonials, and he exposes the manipulation of thought for the first time—this point he will further develop in *1984*.

In *A Clergyman's Daughter* published in 1935, Orwell continues to examine the problematic relationship between an individual and a repressive society. This novel both expresses his belief in the moral goodness of the working class and reflects his expectation for a hospitable society and his failure to discover it.

1936 is a year of vital importance in Orwell's life. On 9 June he marries Eileen O'Shaughnessy. Marriage fills him with energy and security and leads him further in his writing career. In January he is commissioned to write a book on the wretched British coal miners. The resulting novel, *The Road to Wigan Pier*, voices his first knowledge of socialist ideals and his nostalgia for a civilization having long

passed. He eventually becomes a socialist.

In December 1936, Orwell involves himself in the Spanish Civil War (June 1936-1939). He comes to Spain originally as a journalist, but soon he identifies himself as an anti-Fascist warrior in Barcelona, capital of Catalonia. There he finds a community united by a common commitment to human ideals. Orwell declares that he “recognized it immediately as a state of affairs worthy fighting for,”¹ and his commitment to socialism deepens.

Being involved in the Spanish War, he witnesses the ruthless extermination of liberty by the Fascists, and begins attacking lies and threats to human liberty—he comes to see that the control of thought through the control of language is just as dangerous as, or even more dangerous than, the threat of force. When he leaves Spain, his respect for the ordinary man and his detestation against any form of oligarchic regime become greater.² Orwell leaves Spain with a complex understanding of power politics and oligarchic totalitarianism. The Spanish experience is the single most important one in shaping his political writing, as he reflects in 1947: “Every line of serious work that I have written since 1936 has been written, directly or indirectly, against totalitarianism and for democratic Socialism, as I understand it.”³ The outcome of his Spanish experience is *Homage to Catalonia*, published in 1938, which is the only book recording his observations of the Spanish Civil War. Upon leaving Spain, he becomes disillusioned by the failure of democracy to stop Fascism.

By the end of the 1930s, Orwell has gained his fame as an attacker on oligarchic totalitarianism and power politics. In *Coming Up for Air* (1939), Orwell voices his worries that dangers and threats are unavoidable in this world. He writes the novel with the intention to awaken people from “semi-anaesthesia” into a consciousness of the political realities. “The world we’re going down into. The kind of hate-world, slogan world . . . and the processions and the posters with enormous faces and the crowds of a million people cheering for the Leader till they deafen themselves into thinking that they worship him.”⁴ He is disappointed with the scandalous social institutions; however, he keeps confidence in the goodness of the underdog and the soundness of a common cultural heritage.

The outbreak of the Second World War in 1939 intensifies Orwell’s concerns over humanity. He finds that human liberty is being threatened, and he describes a writer as “sitting on a melting iceberg; he is merely an anachronism, a hangover from the bourgeois age, as surely doomed as the hippopotamus.”⁵ In August 1941

Orwell begins working as Talks Assistant, and later as Talks Producer, in the BBC, where he witnesses a great deal of propaganda on either side. He fears that the concept of actuality and objectivity are fading out of the world. Withdrawing from the BBC in November 1943, Orwell soon starts the writing of *Animal Farm*, which is to bring him international fame. This book is political literature in the form of a beast fable, in which Orwell writes from his memory of the falsification of facts, and in which his criticism and satire are aimed as “an illustration of the inherent dangers of all totalitarian systems.”⁶ *Animal Farm* is turned down by several publishers on the ground that it targets at the Soviet Union, still a major ally of the West then. But when eventually published, it proves a great success. In the novel he examines totalitarianism of all types. Orwell himself also rates this book very favorably; in 1947 he comments that *Animal Farm* “was the first book in which I tried, with full consciousness of what I was doing, to fuse political purpose and artistic purpose into one whole.”⁷ Soon he starts the writing of *1984*. He finishes it in 1948 and has it published in 1949. The book turns out to be a sensation throughout the world. Seven months later he dies of TB.

Orwell has been searching a voice for his strong sympathy for human goodness and for his hate against all forms of social evils throughout his life. His success reaches its peak before his death with the last novels of his, *Animal Farm* and *1984*, which are immortal themselves and which make him immortal.

2. *1984*: the Story

Observed in 1948 when *1984* is written, the story takes place in a futuristic country of Oceania and in a futuristic year of 1984. The world then is divided into three superstates: Oceania, Eurasia, and Eastasia, which are perpetually realigning and at war, and are each ruled by a hierarchical, oligarchic government.

The story takes place in dilapidated London, Chief City of Airstrip One, itself the third most populous of the provinces of Oceania. Oceania's power is in firm grasp of the Party. Big Brother, an omnipotent and omniscient figure, is head of the Party and Ingsoc (English Socialism; its territory comprising of the Americas, the British Isles, Australia, etc.). Big Brother's control of its subjects is total: individual freedom is eliminated; human mind and emotion are geared to accord with the Party's will; facts and the past are alterable and continually altered; most of all, language, which is the medium of thought and which assumes the name of Newspeak in Oceania, is strictly maneuvered to practice thought control, and “Doublethink,” such as “war is peace,” makes nonsense of language. In short, the state has reduced the population to abiding and unconscious animals. On the other

hand, the Party maintains a constant war with its enemy; the warfare consumes most of the productive capacity and makes the population exist in poverty and hunger, thus depriving them the opportunity for learning. Oceania's state apparatus comprises of four ministries: the Ministry of Peace (Minipax in Newspeak), concerning itself with war, the Ministry of Truth (Minitrue), with lies and falsification, the Ministry of Love (Miniluv), with torture and hatred, and the Ministry of Plenty (Miniplenty), with starvation.

The protagonist, Winston Smith, works in the Ministry of Truth with thousands of others. In a world of “*unthought*”, Winston alone is in possession of a sense of history and objectivity, and he dislikes facts to be altered. He is courageous enough to seek personal freedom and privately plans a rebellion against Ingsoc. Winston starts his rebellion by writing a diary in which he, unconsciously but hysterically, expresses his hatred toward Big Brother. This is an act of “*thoughtcrime*,” spied upon by the Thought Police from the very beginning.

Winston's rebellious spirit soon finds a reverberation in Julia. They form a sexual relationship, which is a criminal act against the state. The two rent an upstairs room in an antique shop. Their motives for rebellion, however, are not the same: Winston's is a political one, because he can not bear the Party's elimination of memory and control of thought; Julia's is merely a physical one and a shunning away from the Party's rule, for she cares nothing more than to find an outlet for her sexual desire. Winston imagines that Goldstein, the Party's classic traitor and enemy, leads a secret organization “*The Brotherhood*,” which aims at overthrowing the Party, and he plans to participate in it. He also takes it for granted that O'Brien, an Inner Party member, may have been involved in the conspiracy and even acted as a leader. Winston and Julia express to the man their desire for rebellion and their interest in the Brotherhood. O'Brien assures them that the Brotherhood does exist; he then enlists them in it, and gives them Goldstein's book (hereinafter called *the book*) to study.

However, all this conspiracy proves false. O'Brien is not a rebel at all, but one of the senior Party personas in power, a Big Brother-like figure. Winston and Julia's activities have always been under surveillance through a hidden telescreen, and they eventually fall into the trap set up by the Thought Police.

What follows is Winston's physical torture and spiritual reshaping. Julia betrays him immediately. O'Brien, whom Winston has been relied on as a fatherly protector, now acts as a tormentor and inquisitor, and he has continuous, cruel pain inflicted on Winston's body and mind alike, which goes beyond the poor man's endurance. O'Brien reveals why the Party practices thought control: all for pure power only; Winston confesses everything he has done and many kinds of crime he has never committed, but he still loves Julia. Winston, the guardian of human spirit, is gradually tormented into an ugly and humiliating skeleton, and his spirit collapses

as well. His final destruction takes place in Room 101, where happens the “worst thing in the world”; in Winston's case it is rats. When he betrays Julia, he also betrays his conscience and human integrity; most of his humanity is gone. He accepts that two and two make five or anything the Party wants, and even comes to love Big Brother when a bullet is being shot into his head. Oligarchic totalitarianism triumphs over freedom and individualism in the end.

3. 1984: a Revelation and Examination of Oligarchic Totalitarianism

1984 reveals, examines, and attacks oligarchic totalitarianism. The earth in the novel is a tyrannical one. In Oceania, the Party does not concern itself with matter, rather it aims at the power over human mind: by manipulating man's spirit it can achieve complete domination of the world. All the three superstates on the earth are the same in philosophy, social systems, and living conditions. Oligarchic totalitarianism rules the day. The following is O'Brien's phrasing:

*Power is not a means, it is an end. One does not establish a dictatorship in order to safeguard a revolution; one makes the revolution in order to establish the dictatorship. The object of persecution is persecution. The object of torture is torture. The object of power is power.*⁸

This may sound too absurd to today's reader, but it is reality in the *1984* world. Winston is clear that any effort to rebel against the overwhelming Big Brother is doomed, but he is courageous enough that he would rather die in revolt than to live in reconciliation.

(1). Goldstein's Book: Summary and Explanation of Modern Oligarchic Totalitarianism

Goldstein's book (*the book*), *The Theory and Practice of Oligarchical Collectivism*, is a summary and explanation of oligarchic totalitarianism. According to *the book*, the population is divided into three classes: the High, the Middle, and the Low. In the past, the Middle, targeting at the power of the High, spread the ideas of freedom, justice, and fraternity among the Low in order to draw support from

them, and they do realize some of the promises. But in today's world, even the partial truth exists no more; the High now openly proclaim tyranny as their goal. The once masked oligarchic totalitarianism has become completely naked; not a slight trace of freedom exists: human minds are maneuvered and reshaped. One authoritarian group or another ruled various parts of the whole world. "Ingsoc in Oceania, Neo-Bolshevism in Eurasia, Death-Warship, as it is commonly called, in Eastasia, had the conscious aim of perpetuating *unfreedom* and *inequality*."⁹ The ruling groups aim not at human quality, but at voiding the dangers it may cause.

In the past, equality is an impossible dream; but now, with the burgeoning industrial power, wealth is produced in more profusion; as a result, equality becomes approachable. For the state which tries to keep intact the social hierarchy, "[h]uman equality was no longer an ideal to be striven after, but a danger to be averted."¹⁰

(2)Big Brother and Goldstein:

Upholding Ingsoc together

Leader-worship and the maneuvered hatred toward the enemy is one of a major means to sustain the Party's totalitarian, hierarchical rule. In Oceania, head of the state is Big Brother, and enemy, Goldstein. The two men, although never appear in public for even once, are actually very important figures in the **1984** Oceania. They are ubiquitous powers in intense struggle and propel the plot. Big Brother is head of Ingsoc, whose function "is to act as a focusing point for love, fear, and reverence, emotions which are more easily felt toward an individual than toward an organization."¹¹ He is believed to be omniscient and all-powerful, and is worshipped as a loving leader. In contrast, Goldstein is the Enemy of the People and the originator of all evils and crimes, thus being used as a target for hatred.

Big Brother is more the vicious head of the Thought Police than a kindly protector. Orwell deliberately makes ambiguous the caption "Big Brother is watching you" on the posters. The word "watching," as Calder explains, implies both protecting, comforting, and spying, snooping.¹²

The state's manipulation of human nature is complete; *The book* describes this way: "All the beliefs, habits, tastes, emotions, mental attitudes that characterize our time are really designed to sustain the mystique of the Party and prevent the true nature of present-day society from being perceived."¹³ People are kept from

approaching truth, and even the several cubic centimeters inside the skull are not free from spying.

The Party regards power as its own justification and demands a total uniformity. Its outer members are deprived of private life, family relations, and personal emotions. The only accepted emotions are state-controlled fear, rage, triumph, and self-abasement. The image of the future world is extremely horrible: “If you want a picture of the future, imagine a boot stamping on a human face--for ever.”¹⁴

(3) The State: Manipulating Reality and History

Actually, Big Brother and the Party are not omnipotent or infallible, therefore facts and reality have to go through endless manipulation to be kept up to date, so that whatever happens in any time anywhere, the Party is in possession of absolute truth. O'Brien tells Winston this way: “We control matter because we control the mind. Reality is inside the skull.”¹⁵ The Party wants to create an all-correct concept that the present is always better than history and that no understanding other than the Party's is allowed. History is constantly altered, and in Oceania there is no genuine truth. Minitrue, according to Calder, suggests “minimizing what is true.”¹⁶

Ingsoc's subjects are bereft of any memory and any concept of objectivity, for their minds have been deprived of that organism. They accept everything the Party says, automatically and instinctively. In Oceania, “the heresy of heresies is common sense,”¹⁷ because common sense can breed sanity and consciousness in human mind. The **1984** world is an idiotic one.

(4) Warfare: Aiming Inward

Continuous warfare is also one of the major methods utilized by the state to maintain oligarchic totalitarianism. War has changed its character in the Dystopia of **1984**. According to *the book* and as is reality in the novel, there is virtually no material cause to fight for or any victory to achieve. War as an exterior matter loses its meaning. The reason is a psychological one: war keeps people in poverty, which disables them to think. The fact that there is no danger of conquest make possible

the denial of reality. So people are made willing to succumb to fear, hatred, hunger, and hysteria. In this aspect James Hilton's opinion is persuasive:

*The real warfare is the unceasing struggle in and for the human soul--the attempt to eradicate the last traces of free thought and of the truly scientific spirit, to mould human nature into a gray, glum image, and to foul the sources (this is Winston's job) that would leave any basis for historical comparison between present and past.*¹⁸

For the state, the war “is always the same war,”¹⁹ which aims not against any exterior enemy, but against its own people as a means to enslave them. The faked war and permanent enemy help wipe out any possibility of the subjects' awareness of the changes of ally and enemy. In short, warfare is used by Big Brother to practice thought control over its subjects.

4. 1984: Winston's Reconstruction of the Past

(1) Winston : the Protagonist and the Dilemma He Is in

Winston Smith is introduced to the reader in the first paragraph of the first chapter, who is, In Orwell's own terms, the last man in Europe. In a letter to his friend on October 22, 1948, Orwell writes, “I haven't definitely fixed on the title but I am hesitating between **Nineteen Eighty-Four** and **The Last Man in Europe**.”²⁰

The second alternative is symbolic: in a world devoid of hope and humanity, this is the last guardian of human spirit, as far as courage and spirit are concerned. The reader is reminded of the first man, Adam, and his wife, Eve. They disobey God's order by eating the forbidden fruit, and are thus driven from the paradise to the secular world where they are to suffer pain. Here in **1984**, Winston the last man and his lover Julia try to safeguard human spirit and to break the rule of Big Brother, a harsher God; and they are to suffer greater pain.

Winston is not a physically substantial figure; he is distinctively frail and sickly in appearance, who “had a varicose ulcer above his right ankle.”²¹ His smallish and meager body indicates that his rebellion is impotent against the inviolable state.

Winston's complaints groan deep in his inner heart. He aims his hatred at the Party and Big Brother that are responsible for everything. Panic and hysteria go hand in hand in the novel. The word "relentless" can be applied to the situation. This relentlessness is a reference to the Big Brother's atrocious manipulation of human nature.

The narration is mainly about Winston's reconstruction of the past and his rebellion against the state. These two activities are inter-related: by overthrowing Big Brother he can reestablish history. If there is anything extraordinary in our ordinary-looking protagonist, it is his courage and human spirit.

(2)Winston's Searching for the Past through His Rebellion against Big Brother

Orwell's concerns mainly lie in the social and political situations, which in *1984* are far more depressing than the physical one. The Victory Mansions and the bombings are references to war. The all-present Big Brother spies on his subjects forever. The patrols and the Thought Police all deal with taking away individuality and deviation.

Winston is haunted by a strong sense of loss and nostalgia. Among his kind, he is the only one who has not been able to eliminate memory. He is conscious that history and the difference of history have been eradicated. He has an urgent need--both emotionally and intellectually--to reconstruct memory and history. By searching for memory Winston declares a war with Big Brother. Calder believes that "the memory theme operates throughout the novel and informs virtually every aspect of it."²² Winston tries to salvage traces of the past from the present, seeking hope out of hopelessness.

The Diary: Expressing Winston's Longing for the Past

Winston's first act is to open a diary. Writing diary, a thing common in the old days, is now banned by Big brother; breaking the rule is punishable by death. The book he buys "was of a kind that had not been manufactured for at least forty years past,"²³ which is older than himself and is left over from the old days. And "the pen was an archaic instrument."²⁴ The old objects draw out his nostalgia and rebellious spirit. In a world devoid of individual liberty, Winston finishes an intrepid deed.

When writing the date, April 4th 1984, he is at a loss about the year, the month, and the day, and about whether he writes the diary for the future or not; and he can not even recall how old he is. Winston seems to indicate that in the world the continuity of time is broken up. The past is annihilated and the future permanent; thus the date loses its significance. Calder points out that he has “no confidence that there will be a future that will hear his voice.”²⁵

The Glass Paperweight: A Remainder of History

The glass paperweight is a major symbol of Winston's idealized world, which is connected with the past. Put on the table in their secret room, the cute little thing carries more meaning besides the scope of history. Here is Orwell's description:

The inexhaustibly interesting thing was not the fragment of coral but the interior of the glass itself. The paperweight was the room he was in, and the coral was Julia's life and his own, fixed in a sort of eternity at the heart of the crystal. ²⁶

The interior of the paperweight becomes metaphorically the room he rents from Mr. Charrington. In the room he finds comfort, security, and solidarity, rightly the things he tries to seek in order to salvage the past. Inside the corral the inviolable past survives, and his ideal “Golden Country” comes true. Not only has security and beauty arrived, but Winston even expects them to stay forever.

However, a beautiful dream breaks easily. The paperweight is too vulnerable: his human spirit for the pursuit of ancient values can not salvage the world. Winston and Julia fall to the hands of the Thought Police in the end, and the glass paperweight is smashed to pieces. “The fragment of corral, a tiny crinkle of pink like a sugar rosebud, rolled across the mat. How small, thought Winston, how small it always was!”²⁷ Unorthodoxy, the minority of two, is destined to failure in the ocean of a totalitarian state. Just as Lynette Hunter points out that Winston comes to realize “that his paperweight world is not a means of getting at the truth in the past.”²⁸

The Golden Country and Julia: Associated with a Utopian Past

Winston is a dreamer throughout the novel, for “dreams harbor otherwise lost

memories.”²⁹ In his dreams he forms an idyllic image of his ideal past, which he calls the “Golden Country.”

*It was an old, rabbit-bitten pasture, with a foot-track wandering across it and a molehill here and there. In the ragged edge on the opposite of the field the boughs of the elm trees were swaying very faintly in the breeze, their leaves just stirring in dense masses like women's hair. Somewhere near at hand, though out of sight, there was a clear, slow-moving stream where dace were swimming in the pools under the willow trees.*³⁰

This is the Utopia Winston tries to capture. In this ideal dreamland, everything is peaceful and beautiful, free from horror and hatred; also here he finds love in Julia. Julia is a “bold-looking girl, of about twenty-seven, with thick dark hair, a freckled face, and swift, athletic movements.”³¹ She is attractive; but in the beginning Winston hates her and mistakes her as a spy and enemy. However, in his unconsciousness he is attracted to her; so Julia emerges in his dream of the Golden Country. She, with a powerful movement, tears off her clothes. This gesture, Winston muses, seems to drive away the present and what it stands for, “as though Big Brother and the Party and the Thought Police could all be swept into nothingness.”³² Winston in his deeper heart accepts her as a friend and associates her with the recovery of history.

Their first rendezvous is in the bluebell wood, which is secure, enjoyable, and personal. His dream of the Golden Country comes true. In Winston's mind, their sex is a political blow against Big Brother. Julia's love nurtures his body and mind. He gradually grows fatter and healthier. For Winston, their relationship means the past itself which he has tried ceaselessly to find, in which there is the last trace of his human spirit.

Mother: Virtues of Ancient Times

One night he dreams of his mother in a scene like the inside of the paperweight. The story takes place round a chocolate-ration. Not satisfied with the larger part of chocolate his mother gives him, Winston grabs his sister's portion and runs away. When he comes back, his mother and sister are gone, never to come back again. Ever since then Winston is haunted by the guilt for murdering his mother. His last memory of his mother is impressive: “His mother drew her arm around the child and pressed its face against her heart. Something in the gesture told him that his sister was dying.”³³

Winston's mother is a woman of purity and nobility. What really mattered is her love and spirit, for "the standards she obeyed were private ones. Her feelings were her own, and could not be altered from outside."³⁴ These emotions, which belong to the past, have values in themselves. She is a rebel like Winston himself. Winston's guilt for his mother is not that he physically murders her, but that his robbery of his sister's chocolate triggers his mother's demonstration of her inner feelings to the telescreen and the Thought Police; as a consequence, she must be wiped out. When Winston is offered chocolate by Julia during their first meeting, "there was still that memory moving round the edges of his consciousness, something strongly felt but not reducible to definite shapes."³⁵ It is the memory of his mother and her love. In short, the chocolate is a symbol of love, and associates with it, the past. Even if he did not grab his sister's chocolate, his mother would die as well, because she would demonstrate her emotions in some other way.

Later in the Ministry as a captive to be tortured, Winston meets an old woman of 60, about the same age, physique, and name as his mother. She says to him, "I might be your mother."³⁶ But up to now, whether she is Winston's mother or not does not matter any more. Even if the woman were his physical mother, her motherly qualities would surely be eliminated by Big Brother. Winston believes that his mother's love is tragic and sorrowful in a way that is no longer possible.

The Proles: Leftovers from the Past

For Winston, the past survives even in the proletarians, the "proles." In Zehr's words, "The only hope outside of himself that Winston feels lies in his quasi-faith in the proles."³⁷ Although the proles no longer own a sense of history, they have personal emotions and families that Winston believes belong to the past and that he has lost and tried to recapture. So he writes in the diary, "If there is hope, it lies in the proles."³⁸ Winston is fascinated by the folk songs sung by them:

*You owe me three farthings, say the bells of St Martin's,
When will you pay me? say the bells of Old Bailey.
Here comes a candle to light you to bed,
Here comes a chopper to chop off your head.* ³⁹

Orwell deliberately creates a prole woman who sings to incite Winston's imagination. Her life is poor, but she feels content with her private life and family that she is allowed to have, and she sings tunefully and freely. However, Winston has never heard any Party member does this. For Winston, the woman defines "the abiding human spirit that the Party has not extinguished;"⁴⁰ but actually, she and her class have been deprived of the consciousness of their past and heritage. Winston fails to see that the songs invented by the government particularly for the proles are to tame and control them. The song quoted above serves as a prophecy of Winston and Julia's fate: to go to bed, that is, to live a private life, is forbidden.

Therefore, “the Party were so sure of their permanent subjection that they hardly bothered to extend their elaborate surveillance to the areas they lived.”⁴¹

O'Brien: a Past--Present Trap

Winston's search for the past and his rebellion also comprises of his admiration for O'Brien. As the incarnation of power, “O'Brien” may mean “Oceania's Brain” as he really is. His intelligence, facial features, and manner of speaking all resemble that of Big Brother.

O'Brien represents Ingsoc and oligarchic totalitarianism and in essence is hostile to deviation; but he skillfully disguises himself as the substitute of Goldstein and the enemy of the Party, thus succeeding in disarming Winston and in luring him to the trap he sets up.

O'Brien is a physically strong man whose graceful behavior recalls in Winston “an eighteenth-century nobleman offering his snuffbox.”⁴² Here O'Brien is associated with the past in Winston's mind. O'Brien is able to grasp the inner psychology of Winston and his alike, who, having not been able to eliminate the sense of memory and history, will surely turn back to the old days for dependence, and will rely on him as a rebel leader.

Winston, unable to see through O'Brien's true identity, believes that this mysterious figure is someone he can confide in, for O'Brien's political orthodox may not be perfect. O'Brien never fails to catch any detail of Winston's thought and can predict precisely what he will think. He arranges a secret meeting, where he solicits Winston's commitment without having to make his own. The commitment is a harsh one: “You are prepared to cheat, to forge, to blackmail, to corrupt the minds of children, to distribute habit-forming drugs, to encourage prostitution, to disseminate venereal diseases--to do anything which is likely to cause demoralization and weaken the power of the Party.”⁴³ The ironical terror of O'Brien's philosophy is that the ends justify the means: whatever way, so long as it can help corrupt the Party, is accepted. Winston has to abandon the humanity he has just learned, and he is willing to do anything O'Brien orders him to do. O'Brien intentionally mystifies the false organization, whose description of the Brotherhood actually refers to Ingsoc instead of a revolting organization. The idea of Brotherhood, which O'Brien does not define, means nothing and leads to nowhere. Winston is so blinded that he cannot see that the Brotherhood is another version of the Party. O'Brien makes it explicit that hope does not exist: death is the only result that awaits Winston. He is not trying to hold Winston back from the wrong route, but luring him further.

Eventually Winston is caught by the Thought Police; O'Brien removes his disguise and starts to “reeducate” Winston. *The book*, which O'Brien gives Winston

to read, “had passed through many hands,”⁴⁴ which is another way to say that many people have been trapped and wiped out. O'Brien the tyrant is a skilled inveigler.

O'Brien allows Winston to err, because he wants to test how strong his power is, for he aims at remolding Winston's mind. O'Brien is interested not in his punishment, but in his full-hearted transformation, while Winston truly believes that O'Brien does this for his own good.

Notes

- 1 *Dictionary of Literary Bibliography*, Vol. 15, 415.
- 2 *Methuen Notes on Nineteen Eighty-four*, 6.
- 3 *Dictionary of Literary Bibliography*, Vol. 15, 413
- 4 *Ibid.*, 416.
- 5 *Ibid.*, 417.
- 6 *Twentieth-Century Literary Criticism*, Vol. 31, 176.
- 7 *Dictionary of Literary Bibliography*, Vol. 15, 419.
- 8 **1984**, 211-2.
- 9 *Ibid.*, 163.
- 10 *Ibid.*, 164.
- 11 *Ibid.*, 167.
- 12 *Open Guide to Literature: Animal Farm and Nineteen Eighty-four*, 40.
- 13 **1984**, 168.
- 14 *Ibid.*, 215.
- 15 *Ibid.*, 212.
- 16 *Open Guide to Literature: Animal Farm and Nineteen Eighty-four*, 40.
- 17 **1984**, 68.
- 18 *Twentieth-Century Literary Criticism*, Vol. 15, 299.
- 19 **1984**, 151.
- 20 *Twentieth-Century Literary Criticism*, Vol. 15, 298.
- 21 **1984**, 5.
- 22 *Open Guide to Literature: Animal Farm and Nineteen Eighty-four*, 59.
- 23 **1984**, 9.
- 24 *Ibid.*, 9.
- 25 *Open Guide to Literature: Animal Farm and Nineteen Eighty-four*, 59.
- 26 **1984**, 120.
- 27 *Ibid.*, 177.
- 28 *George Orwell: The Search for a Voice*, 207.
- 29 *Ibid.*, 208.
- 30 **1984**, 28.

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